PATHWAY TO GOD

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ONE WORLD – ONE HUMANITY

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PATHWAY TO GOD

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B. Sc., C. Eng. F. I. E., M. A. S. C. E.
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☎ : (0831) 2465701. *Editor-in-Chief*

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Shri S. S. Kelkar, B.Com., F. C. A.
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Prayer

to Lord Rudra Shiva

(Stanzawise Translation in English)

द्रापे अन्धसस्पते दरिद्रन्नील लोहित।
एषां पुरुषाणामेषां पशूनांमा भे र्मा ऽ रो
मो एषां किं च नाममत् ॥ १ ॥

Oh Lord who is the master of all food growing out of mud, who appears reddish blue in colour, who lives like a poverty-stricken man, (I pray) please do not strike terror and frighten all these men as well as beasts.

या ते रुद्र शिवा तनूः शिवा विश्वाह भेषजी।
शिवा रुद्रस्य भेषजी तया नो मृड जीवसे ॥ २ ॥

Oh Lord Rudra, your propitious body can bestow well-being on all beings and also act as a confident medicinal presence to keep them healthy. (Thus we are all under your benevolent protection)

इमा ꣳ रुद्राय तवसे कपर्दिने क्षयद्धीराय प्रभरामहे मतिं ।
यथानः शमसद् द्विपदे चतुष्पदे विश्वं पुष्टं ग्रामे अस्मिन्ननातुरं ॥ ३ ॥

We pray earnestly to the Lord Rudra, who is powerful, whose hair are bound is spirals on his head and who loves to stay alone in his abode, that our world of beings two-legged as well as four-legged be happy and well-nourished and nobody may remain needy and worried in their places.

मृडानो रुद्रोतनो मयस्कृधि क्षयद्वीराय नमसाविधेम ते ।
यच्छं च योश्च मनूरायजे पिता तदश्याम तव रुद्रप्रणीतौ ॥४॥

Oh Rudra who stays alone in his abode, bestow happiness on us here as well as in the world beyond. We follow the path laid by you. The ability given to us by our father Manu to gain happiness and overcome unhappiness depends on your blessings.

मानो महान्तमुत मानो अर्भकं मा न उक्षन्तमुत मा न उक्षितम् ।
मानो वधीः पितरं मोत मातरं प्रिया मानस्तनुवो रु द्र री रि षः ॥५॥

Oh Rudra, do not kill those who are elderly amongst us, nor who are just children or foetuses. Also not who look after the families as fathers or mothers nor our bodies who are dear to us.

मा न स्तोके तनये मा न आयुषि मानो गोषु मानो अश्वेषु री रिषः ॥
वीरान्मा नो रुद्र भामितो वधी र्हविष्मन्तो नमसा विधेमते ॥६॥

Do not kill our children, nor take away our lives, nor our cows, horses and the brave amongst us. We are those who always worship you with sacrificial offerings regularly.

आरात्ते गोन्घ उत पूरुषन्घे क्षय द्वीतराय सु म्नमस्मे ते अस्तु ।
रक्षा च नो अधि च देव ब्रूह्यधा च नमः शर्म यच्छ द्विबर्हा : ॥७॥

Oh Lord, keep away from us your attribute as a brave warrior who kills the enemies, and look to us with your benevolent and protective nature. Give as your love and compassion more than others and give us happiness in both the worlds.

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Prayer to Shree Ganesh

My salutations to Lord Ganesh, to giver of talents and success thereof,
Destroyer of ignorance and wrong conceptions
Giver of understanding and knowledge in study undertaken
I earnestly entreat you to fill by innermost being by your presence and bless me with right words even if I fall short
The power of your blessings melts away the screens of blurred vision and the blackness of ignorance pervading the whole world.
Bless me with devotion to you.
The moment your blessings befall anybody the helpless obstacles tremble and run away only by uttering your name. You are named Remover of obstacles and as final refuge not for us but also for Gods.
You bring success in activities without interference of obstacles.
Mere remembrance of your form brings deep satisfaction with gaze fixed on you forgetting one's own body. Your visible form is so beautiful with shining awe that all Gods start dancing and stand aghast.
You are always filled with extreme ectasy.
The body swaying, face shining with brightness in delightful blessing mood.
Salutations to you for all blessings showered on me,

(From Dasabodh)
- P. D. Dharwarkar

Thus Spake Gurudeo...

The form of God. : The vision of God and the perception of external objects differ vastly; the former is centrally initiated, the latter impinges upon the senses from outside. In ordinary perception an external thing is necessary. Only if an object is there, perception can take place and not otherwise. The vision of God is something unique. in mystical experience the Form of God comes from inside and is then experienced. The two phenomena also differ physiologically. For the perception of an external thing, light must be present, vision must be clear and the eyes should be open. Not so in mystical experience. The Vastu (वस्तु) or the form of God can be seen in darkness, it can be visualised with eyes shut. Shri. Lingappa Savalgi used to see the Vastu even with his blind eye. The reality of Vastu is thus corroborated. The Form of God is not seen with the physical eyes nor is the Anahat (अनाहत) sound (Unstruck sound) heard with the physical ear. These visions arise from within. Someone asked of Shri Baba, if 'whatever is seen is destined to die', (यद्दृष्टम, तन्नष्टम.) Vastu, which is seen, may also be doomed to destruction. The questioner did not realise that the term 'seen' in these two cases implies different things. Modern Western physiologists have putforth a new theory that the brain as a whole sees, hears or thinks. Every cell of the brain has the potency to see, seeing is not exclusively confined to a single centre, and other parts of the brain are capable of taking over that function. It is not therefore impossible to see with the ears and hear with the eyes.

In the Midst of Discussion at Allahbad in 1945

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EDITORIAL

Spirituality, Philosophical Research and the World

The spirit, the innermost elemental essence in man is known and accepted by all religions and theosophical theories since long to be the purest unsullied and perfect entity also known as soul in the human being as a manifestation of the Universal Supreme Being, also called The Almighty God. Each body and mind is a creation of this soul. The body and the brain are instruments in the hands of the mind, which forgets its relation with the perfect and unsullied soul and becomes imperfect and swayed by various desires and passions, likes and dislikes which abound in the world around. It develops ego, selfish possessiveness, avarice, illwill and possibly jealousy and hatred and forgets its brotherhood with all beings and creations in this world which are manifestations of the same Universal Supreme Being.

To attain spirituality, one has to make the sullied and imperfect body and mind regain the purest state to understand the soul and realise Godhood. Devotion to God, meditation, techniques of Yoga and knowledge are means to attain spirituality and Godhood. No amount of words can describe the soul or universal Self as mentioned in the scriptures, but can be experienced in the highest and purest state of mind, also known as Samadhi.

To explain the relation within the body, mind and soul, knowledgeable writers give the example of the tree and the two birds. One bird sits in the middle of tree and feeds itself with the fruits abounding around, some sweet and some sour. The other bird sits on the upper most top of the tree, is silent, unperturbed and has a wide undisturbed vision. The middle bird is the mind, the top most bird is the soul and the tree represents the body and the materialistic world. When the middle bird travels upwards and merges with the top most bird, the man reaches Godhood. The simile is akin to the travel of the life force in the form of the Kundalini from the solar plexus to the top of the cerebrum through the Sushumna by practice of the Yoga techniques.

The spiritual man with his attainment of brotherhood with all beings and creations of God, must participate in the worldly activities to reform the society and the individuals with his selfless behaviour and dealings. To participate, in worldly activities in such a way should also be considered as God's work and should not be shunned keeping oneself aloof which will develop a new form of Ego and make the spiritual attainment fruitless.

In India, the educated and learned elite developed egoistic pride in their learning & religious attitudes, kept themselves aloof which created the casteist groups destroying the feelings of brotherhood which has degenerated the whole society with unmanageable crave for self-centred possessive benefits ultimately leading to widespread corruption and loss of moral base. Dr. Ambedkar said that without brotherhood, equality and liberty lose their meaning.

The western nations on the other hand have preserved their moral and ethical base, work culture, sincerity of purpose and unity in the nation. Thanks to our Swamis, Sanyasis and missions like Ramakrishna mission and others who go all over the world and spread the gospel of yoga and its benefits. There is no doubt that the westerner with firm moral and ethical base and sincerity of purpose will make their societies rich in spiritual content while the Indian society will be stuck up in the mire of a varice for money and its pleasures. The analytical study of our scriptures and Mahabharat have already appealed to the western philosophers and they are engaged in the deep study of the Hindu religious doctrines which are not at all dogmatic and enrich the basic human nature.

Our philosophical research institutions have still continued themselves with research in the archaic past like source of languages or history of the old devotional sects and rituals rather than look into the present problems of the society.

Philosophy so to say is the mother science of all disciplines and professions in the society. There are philosophies of law, medicine, engineering, education - the list will be more than hundred - which are taken up for continuous research in the western countries. The author personally knows that the world philosophical congress held in Boston in Aug-1998 published around more than forty four topics for call of research papers. Our society is in a pitiable degenerated condition with a jungle of problems in many fields. Our moral and ethical fabric is torn, no altruism, the philosophy of law and justice is outdated. New models of philosophy need to be structured. The philosophers and philosophical institutions should look into the present and future rather the past for their thesis. These institutions should pressurise the govt. to give due importance to the problems of society by offering studied solutions.

Philosophers should consider it as their duty and responsibility to look to the present status and condition of the society and try to improve them. Karl Marx, Hegel, Nitze were philosophers and not politicians, who changed the course of societies and govt. and wielded great influence on the type of governance their countries had. Philosophy instead of going along the old habits, should rise up in a dignified way with its many branches, provide solutions and put the society on the right track. The systems in developed countries need to be studied for improving our methodologies.

The world or any country cannot be put into one pattern because of diversity in the human being. The only unity is in the perfect unsullied soul in each body and being. All other things need to be disciplined by proper philosophies.

In USA and other developed countries, if any uncommon or untoward incident happens in the society, it is reported to the research body, apart from the governance agency, to study and offer suggestions.

When young students fired from their pistols at the teachers in school, in USA, the reseach bodies were asked to look into the reasons from the mental states point of view, apart from the governance steps, for suggestion to improve the systems if need be.

In a Boston hospital, a heart patient was almost taken for granted as dead (year approx 1998), when he revived and told the doctors that had gone to see his wife in around western USA, but his wife couldn't see him even though he was standing near her and hence he returned back to his body on the doctor's table. When the doctors found that there was truth in what he said from the details, the case was referred to the research department.

In India, we do not have such system procedures. Even if farmers commit suicide, there is no study made or system solutions offered. All such cases broadly come under some branch of philosophy which needs to look into them.

The demands for philosophical solutions in society are great. Will our philosophy institutions study the systems in developed countries and rise to the occasion and improve our systems or prefer to remain decades if not centuries behind the developed world?

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If you sit for Meditation, Shri Maharaj used to say, one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening, that wipes out the effect of evil actions. He also said that after intense meditation for 3 hours, one has the satisfaction as if one has drunk half a seer of milk. Shri Maharaj during his spiritual sojourns, used to cover himself with a blanket and sit for meditation in the bullock-cart itself at the appointed time. Likewise he used to meditate in a standing posture the previous night. This is verily the unfailing rigorous meditation.

- Gurudeo on Meticulousness of Meditation.

(Continued from last issue)

Eternity Compressed in Time : My Reminiscences of Shri Gurudeva

Till now Shri Gurudeva has given an exposition of the views held by prominent Hindi saints regarding the nature of God, and the prayers they offered to Him. Presently he proceeds to a description of the actual path of their pilgrimage, as well as conditions, which are necessary for taking them to their desired goal. In this context the aspirants must feel the necessity of a spiritual teacher who will guide them through the moral and physical turmoil of life. The spiritual teacher imparts the Name of God to the seeker who has to meditate on it. The problem of the relation between the Name and the Form of God as tackled by the Hindi saints is discussed by Shri Gurudeva in this connection. The spiritual teacher also gives the aspirant instruction regarding the proper method of meditation on the Name of God. Shri Gurudeva tells us that the methodology of meditation according to saint Kabir consists of five points, namely internal meditation with the help of breath; intense concentration on the Name; life-long meditation; continuous meditation without wasting a single moment; meditation in the spirit of full devotion. He recalls in this connection the famous Sutra of Patanjali (स तु दीर्घकाल नैरन्तर्य सत्कारा सेवितो दृढ भूमि:) which gives in nutshell all the important aspects of the process of meditation.

Shri Gurudeva takes up the song of Kabir 'गुरुबिन कौन बतावे

बाट', to explain the necessity of a spiritual teacher for guiding the aspirant in his pilgrimage on the path of God. In this song Kabir has given a vivid description of river of life in an allegorical way to warn an aspirant regarding the troubles in which the ship of his life might find itself. Firstly, "there is a vast mountainous region in this river of life, and towering pillar against which the ship might strike and break itself at any moment. Then there are two projecting rocks, the Scylla and the Charybdis, through which it is very difficult for the ship to pass unscathed. Then again Kabir tells us that a sharp shower might overtake the course of the ship, and a tempestuous storm might submerge it at any moment. Finally, even if the ship of man's life escapes all these dangers, there is a gang of robbers which might overtake it, plunder it and denude it." (Pathway to God in Hindi Literature, pp. 170-71).

In this allegory, Kabir points out that the so-called mountainous region is the region of delusion (भ्रान्ति पहाड़ी), which is both extensive and threatening at the same time. Egoism shoots up like a pillar (अहंकार की लाट) against which the ship might strike at any time. Sex (काम) and rage (क्रोध) constitute the two rocks, through the narrow straits of which it is difficult for the ship to pass. Envy (मत्सर) is the sharp shower, which may at any time throw the ship in a state of confusion, and illusion is the tempestuous storm (माया पौन) through which the only destiny of the ship is to suffer wreckage. Finally, if a man succeeds in escaping all these dangers, he might find himself surrounded by a gang of robbers like avarice and greed (लोभ), which might destroy his moral and spiritual worth and render him helpless and hopeless. Kabir asks, "Who can direct the ship of a man's life except a spiritual guide who knows the danger spots and situations, and possesses the power to carry the ship successfully to the other shore of existence?

Shri Gurudeva then considers two songs of Kabir, which celebrate the greatness of the spiritual teacher. The two songs are :

1) साचो सो सतगुरु योहिं भावै ।
2) वोई सतगुरु संत कहावै ।

Analysing these two songs, Shri Gurudeva brings out four chief groups of characteristics, which Kabir assigns to the spiritual teacher. First, there are the moral characteristics of a Sadguru; then there are certain physiological characteristics which belong to a Sadguru proper; and fourthly, there are the social characteristics by which he uplifts all humanity.

Coming to the moral characteristics mentioned in Kabir's songs. Shri Gurudeva in particular refers to fearlessness, actionlessness and joy. Firstly, a Sadguru remains fearless because of his experience of God or Brahman who is the very embodiment of bliss. Shri Gurudeva here recalls the Upanishadic statement connecting fearlesness and joy or bliss - "आनंद ब्रह्मणो विद्धान् न विभेति कदाचन न विभेति कुतश्चन"

A Sadguru is never overcome by lassitude, weariness, neglect and dissatisfaction. On the contrary, he keeps the fire of yoga aflame in the midst of enjoyment (भोग में जोग जगावै). Secondly, a Sadguru maintains full actionlessness in the midst of action (करम करै निहकरम रहै जो). He devotes all his actions to God, so he really remains actionless, as the Bhagavadgita says.

Again, a Sadguru in his blissful state of God-realisation manifests some physiological characteristics. In the first place, he does not shut the doorways of his sense (द्धार न रूँधै). Nor does he feel any necessity for controlling his breath (पवन न रोकै). His spiritual joy enables him to control his motor and sensory organs automatically without his playing any active part in the process. He remains self-poised in the midst of all his activities (डोलत डिगै न बोलत विसरै). Secondly, Kabir tells us that a Sadguru always enjoys the state of Sahaja Samadhi. As Shri Gurudeva explains, he has merely to look out to see God. Such a state of Sahaja Samadhi can be easily differentiated from another in which there is deliberate breath-control (प्राणनिरोध)- "प्राणपूज्य किरिया हे न्यारा सहज समाधि सिखावै". The physiological samadhi is attained in a full control of the breath in a state of Kumbhaka. The last physiological characteristic according to Kabir is that a Sadguru erects a bottomless cottage between the heaven and the earth- "धरती त्याग अकासहु त्यागै, अधरमडैया धावै" Shri Gurudeva explains this peculiar statement by pointing out that a Sage establishes in his thorax a bottomless cottage in the form of Kevala Kumbhaka between the navel, which constitutes the earth (धरती) and the topmost part of the brain (सहस्त्रार) which constitutes the heaven (आकाश). This Kumbhaka or state of breathlessness is automatically induced, which produces in turn a perfect equanimity of mind and body.

Then there are mystical characteristics of such a Sadguru. In the first place, a Sadguru is able to make his self-consciousness enter Shabda (शब्द में सुरत समावै). Secondly, a Sadguru sees only God and nothing else wherever he casts his eyes : "यह मन जाय जहाँ जग जब ही, परमातम दरसावै". Shri Gurudeva says, "In between all things and himself is God who prevents the vision of other things. A third mystical characteristic is that the Sadguru is able to see outside exactly what he sees inside. "There is in such a realiser a perfect parity between internal and external perception. "भीतर

रहा सो बाहिर देखै । दूजा दृष्टि न आवै ।" Shri Gurudeva regards this point as worthy of note. It is the hallmark of a genuine mystical experience that the internal and external perception of God must be alike. If there is internal perception to which nothing external corresponds, it may be a case of imagination, hallucination or illusion. If, on the other hand, there is something external to which nothing internal corresponds, then it cannot be a case of super sensuous experience and may be ultimately unreal.

Explaining the social characteristics of the Sadguru, Shri Gurudeva tells us that under the influence of the Spiritual Law of Gravitation the experiences of a worthy Sadguru must automatically descend to his disciples. As water at a higher level must descend to a lower level, so the experience of a spiritual teacher must descend automatically to those who are walking on the path he has trodden. According to Kabir. The Sadguru not only drinks the juice of God's Name, but also makes others drink it :

"सत्तनाम का भर-भर प्याला ।
आप पिए मोहिं प्यावै ॥ "

A second great characteristic of the Sadguru is that if he is able to fasten his mind on the 'अलक्ष्य' , the disciples also are able to see the unseen form of God : नैनन अलख लखावै.

He lifts up the curtain of darkness, and makes them visualise the Paramatman : "परदा दूर करै आँखिन का, परमातम दरसावै."

Again, if he is an expert in amalgamating himself with the spiritual sound, his disciples also automatically find themselves experiencing the Shabda and coming into unison with it. Commenting on Kabir's view that that the Sadguru does not entangle his disciples in the Shabda (नहिं अनहत अरुझावै), Shri

Gurudeva clarifies that if by Anahat Kabir means the sound that comes from the digestive process, then his advice that a disciple must not get himself entangled in Anahat is understandable. If, on the other hand, there is no distinction between Anahat and Shabda, "the more one gets oneself entangled in Anahat, the more fortunate one must regard oneself to be." Sounds heard by us from the digestive process should not be confounded with the unstruck sound, which a mystic is fortunate to hear. "Sound and form are both expressions of God, and it matters little in what way God manifests Himself to the aspiring disciple", says Shri Gurudeva. (Ibid. pp. 177-78).

Finally, the great characteristic of a spiritual teacher is that he enables his disciples to abide in God so that there is no return for him in the mundane world :

"कहत कबीर बसावै हंसा, आवागमन मिटावै."

To see such a Sadguru is really to see God (जाके दरसन साहब दरसै), and whatever emotions or feelings, conceptions or aspirations we might entertain about God, might as well be entertained about such a spiritual teacher, who is His replica on earth." Shri Gurudeva here recalls the statement of Samartha Ramadas, which conveys in the same strain the identity of the Sadguru with God : "जैसा देव तैसा गुरु। शास्त्री बोलिला हा विचारु। म्हणौन सख्यत्वाचा प्रकारु सदगुरुसी असावा ॥ "

- *Dasabodha, IV.8.32*

(To be continued)

Prof. M. L. Sharma,
115, Malviya Nagar,
Jodhpur 342 011. (Rajasthan)

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(Continued from last issue)

Bhagwadgeeta & its exposition
by Sant Dnyaneshwar

Chapter VIII (अक्षरब्रह्म योग)

The Unchanging Eternal Brahma

The Course of Cosmic evolution Brahman
The Essential Supreme Nature of The Self

(Sanskrit Script followed by English Translation)

यं यं वाऽपि स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ।
तं तमेवैति कौंतेय सदा तद्भावभावितः ॥६॥

Thinking of whatever state of being he, at the end, gives up his body, being ever absorbed in the thought thereof, he attains that state, oh son of Kunti (in the next birth) (6)

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

Throughout his life a man develops a liking for a particular state and style of living, and accordingly he thinks of the same at the time of death and attains it in the next birth. (6)

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्यच ।
मय्यर्पित मनोबुद्धिममिवैष्यस्य संशय : ॥७॥

Therefore, at all times remember Me and fight. When your mind and intellect are devoted to Me, there is no doubt that you will come to Me. (7)

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

The things that we see with our eyes, hear with our ears, think in our minds, conceive in our hearts, that which appear outside or in your talks, all originate in Me. Therefore always remember Me so that you will understand how I pervade all spaces and everywhere. Then, you will never die even if the body leaves you. So what is the hesitation in fighting this war. If you merge your mind and intellect in Me, you will become part of Me. If you get any doubt as to how this can happen, experience it first and then find fault with what I say.

अभ्यासयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिंतयन् ॥८॥

He, who meditates with the mind attuned by constant practice without wandering after anything else, attains the Supreme Divine Being. (8)

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

When concentration and constant thinking are put together in the mind, what is not possible? Even a lame man can climb a mountain. Likewise, the thought of Brahma should be studied with the intellect in concentration and the mind attuned to it, then no attainment is impossible. Then, the wandering mind will steady itself on the single thought of the Self without bothering whether the body remains with you or not. Consider for a moment that the water of the river is speedily rushing towards the sea. Can it look back or return to see what is happening behind? When it meets the sea, it becomes sea. Likewise, when the mind meets the soul it goes beyond the state of birth and death. There is nothing but Bliss in that state.

कविं पुराणमनुशासितारमणो रणी यांस मनुस्मरेद्यः ।
सर्वस्य धातारमचिन्त्यरूपमाहित्य वर्णं तमसः परस्तात् ॥९॥
प्रयाणकाले मनसाऽचलेन भक्त्यायुक्तो योगबलेन चैव ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्ये प्राणमावेश्य सम्यक् सतं परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥१०॥

He Who meditates on (Para Brahma) as the oldest omniscient ruler, subtler than subtlest, the sustainer of all, whose form is inconceivable, self-luminous like the sun and beyond the ignorant material reality (9)

He who does so (as above in [1]) at the time of death, with a steadfast mind, devotion and strength of yoga, setting well the life force in the centre of the eye-brows, attains the Supreme Divine Being (10)

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

One who can understand the formless existence of the most ancient entity which is omniscient, smaller than the smallest but pervades the whole universe supporting the same by its existence, controls all the activities in the universe, is self-luminous like the sun the conception of which is beyond the capacities of our mind, which is ever effulgent, does not know any darkness, which is beyond ignorance and material existence, which is known as Parabrahma or the Supreme Being, he alone can reach Me if he remembers Me at the time of death because of his steadfast mind fixed in devotion and bringing the life force between the eyebrows on his strength of Yoga. Oh Arjuna, it is for him like a lamp covered by an earthen pot is not known when it gets extinguished or when the life force merges with the all pervading Supreme Universal Self. (9 & 10)

यदक्षरं वेदविदो वदन्ति विशन्ति यद्यतयो वीतरागा : ।
यदिच्छंतो ब्रह्मचर्यं चरन्ति तत्ते पदं संग्रहेण प्रवक्ष्ये ॥११ ॥

I shall briefly explain to you that supreme abode which the knowers of Vedas call imperishable, into which ascetics freed from passion, enter; desiring which people lead a life of celibacy and self control.

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

Those learned people who know Vedas and have reached the supermost peak of knowledge call the Parabrahma as imperishable and immutable. It is like the sky which does not undergo any change due to the most powerful cyclones. It is beyond Maya & hence in form of Bliss. Those who have conquered all passions, desire intently to enter this abode. For this abode, the Yogis do not bother about the difficulties of celibacy and self control and go to the farthest extent to become worthy of it and Vedas become unable to explain anything about it. But those who leave the body as I told you before, only reach this Supreme state. Arjuna says, Oh Krishna you have condescended to explain all this to me, but please explain in a very easy way so I can understand the same. Shri Krishna says, Oh Arjuna, please attune your mind only to what I will tell you now & listen.

सर्वद्धाराणि संयम्य मनो हृदि निरुध्यच ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायात्मनः प्राणमास्थितो योगधारणाम् ॥१२॥
ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् मामनुस्मरन् ।
यः प्रयाति त्यजन्देहंस याति परमां गतिम् ॥१३॥

All the gates of the body restrained, the mind confined within the heart, one's life force established in the cerebrum in concentration by Yoga (12)

(and then) one who utters single syllable Aum (which represents Brahman), remembering Me as he departs, giving up his body, attains the highest state. (13)

Sant Dnyaneshwar explains -

This can happen only when all the gates of the body are closed by restraint and the mind allowed to rest silently in the heart. Thus when the mind remains steady and silent, one should meditate on Om and gradually take Prāna, the life force up in the cerebrum and hold it there by Yogic technique (through the sushumna) till it mingles with the sound of Aum and allow the consciousness to enter the state of Parabrahma.

When this happens the utterance of Om stops by itself and the soul remains in Bliss. One who thus remembers Me in this state and leaves the body, reaches Me only, as there is no other way where the soul can go.

Oh Arjuna, a doubt may arise in your mind how one can remember Me at this last stage of leaving the body. However I tell you not to have such doubts. Because one who is devoted to Me and worships Me, I become his servant and be with him at that stage.

(To be continued)

- P. D. Dharwarkar

188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi,
Belgaum - 590 006.

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Mere outward display of virtues having no spiritual basis is hollow. However, good acts have their own value in spiritual life. The blossoming of virtues is an effect, while God-vision is the cause. Hence, in order to reap the harvest of virtues, one must sow the seeds of repetition of God's name. As morality is a pre-requisite of mystical life, virtues must be practised continuously till one's character is confirmed in virtue. Our main concern should be self-purification. It may have its own impact on others. Merely running after improvement of others is no good.

- Gurudev Ranade

Shri Sharakka Maharaj
The Love incarnate

There she should be waiting to welcome everyone with her face beaming with joy, with kind words for each and her whole attitude oozing with affection. Anyone coming in contact with her had this feeling of being bathed in her love. It was this love that directed her towards God and it never stopped till she merged into Him.

She was born in February 1905 and her birth centenary falls in February 2005. She was born and brought up in Dharwad in the Deshpande family. Her father who was well-to-do with landed property of three villages, was a teacher by profession and also recognised as a musician. Sharakka or Sharada was the eldest of his two daughters and three sons. Since childhood, she was well behaved, always cheerful, good-looking with fair skin and long hair, was popular in the neighbourhood because of her participation in many of their activities.

Her parents had the first glimpse of the divinity in her when they realised that she always brought them good luck. Her father would wait for her smile before going out for some important work. Notwithstanding all her virtues, she had to suffer grief in family life. She lost her mother when she was eleven; her father married her off to a Landlord, but as fate would have it, her husband died within a year of marriage when she was still thirteen. Her father was trying to plan something for her when he himself suffered from plague and passed away. The family was distraught with calamity. The eldest brother now shouldered the family responsibility. He married off Sharakka's sister, Sundarakka to Prin. K. V. Gajendragadkar who was then a fellow with Dr. R. D. Ranade (later known as Gurudev Ranade). Sharakka was now a widow had to remove her hair as custom demanded as her brother did not have the modern outlook nor the courage. The authoress's father known as Kaka was shocked and suggested her that she should get educated and lead an independent life or else get initiated in Nimbargi Sampradaya and follow the spiritual path. Sharakka, who was mother's sister to the authoress chose the second option, the spiritual path.

Sharakka's parents were great devotees of Dattatreya, visited the Dattetreya Temple in Dharwad every Thursday and sang bhajans till late night and small hours of the next morning. Sharakka had absorbed all this religious culture of the family and added to it her own affection to God. The misfortunes she suffered in very young age made her sad and think seriously about life. At this time she came to know Kaka, the anthoress's father, who was educated; rationalistic and exceptionally fortunate in having Gurudev Ranade as his teacher and guide, at whose instance he was initiated by Amburao Maharaj; so also was my mother. Sharakka knew the teachings of Nimbargi Sampradaya through them. Later Kaka requested Amburao Maharaj (Baba) to initiate Sharakka. Baba asked Kaka to send her to Belgaum to meet him. She came to Belgaum but went back to Dharwad as Baba's programme had changed. Baba had later gone to Dharwad and stayed with Godbole family who was known to Sharakka. Baba sent a message to Sharakka to came there for initiation. Baba then gave "Nama" and asked her to sit for meditation. She didn't budge till she was asked to get up after a pretty long time. This was in 1927.

Sharakka took about two to three months to get used to sitting in meditation for a long time regularly with full concentration and devotion. One day, she had an uncommon experience of seeing smoke rising up and disappearing in air. She was not sure whether this was a mystical experience. She consulted Kaka, who told her the quotation from upanishads "नीहार धूमार्क ऽ नलानिलाणाम्" which mentions smoke as one of the preliminary forms of Brahma, experienced mystically during meditation. This experience was related to Baba and Gurudeva Ranade and she earned a special place in eyes of her Guru and the Sadhakas. Her mystical experiences went on ascending continuously to higher and higher stages. She could sing devotional songs even of mystical experiences so that the Sadhakas sitting for meditation of stretches of six hours continuously would not get bored. This was on her visits to Inchgeri. Baba could correct her small mistakes which helped her to develop further. Baba was a great protector for her and he always saw that she was safe being a young female with no guile.

Baba protected her even from great dangers. Once she wanted to go home after the Saptaha and asked for Baba's permission. He told her to go the next day. She wanted to go the same day as she had a company. Baba touched her shoulder and permitted her to go. On the way the bullock cart, they were travelling in was turned over and her shoulder was hurt. Kaka, later wrote to Gurudev and Gurudev replied that Baba had saved her from the danger of death and converted it into a small injury. Sharakka had great faith in Baba as a Sadguru and identified him with God. She was overjoyed when he once came to her with Laxman Bhatji to partake the food cooked by her in answer to her prayer to God that her Guru should visit her to partake the food as prasad.

When Baba departed from this world, it was only six years after her initiation and she was immersed in grief alongwith other Sadhakas. Kaka advised her to go to Nimbal and take Gurudeva Ranade's guidance as he was the only person of Baba's calibre. Sharakka had met Gurudeva only once and that too a long time back. She started going to Nimbal, but found that Gurudev's personality was different. Baba was open-minded, frank and mixed freely with all disciples. Though Gurudev was sympathetic and generous, he kept himself aloof and rarely allowed women to approach him or bow down to him. Gurudev however, enquired about her Nema (meditation) and progress. Once he asked her whether she had gone to Inchgeri. She replied that she didn't go as Baba was not there. Gurudev emphatically told that Baba was there and she should not stop going there. He granted her permission to go the next day and went to his room. However, Gurudev knew her deep feelings and fulfilled her desire for "darshan" and "Sambhashana" in answer to her inner prayers. She continued to go to Inchageri till it was possible to visit Baba's Samadhi.

While her spiritual life was progressing ahead on one side there were drastic changes in her family life. Her brother had lost almost all her property and she herself had to look after the remaining lands. Her parents and friends helped her to start an independent life. She left brother's house. Her younger brother Chidambarrao had also to leave the house and joined her within a few months. She started looking after him, his education, employment and marriage. After that she stayed in Nasik with her sister and would see her brother once a year. She was should dering all the responsibilities in all these houses. After her second elder brother's wife expired, she came back to Dharwad to look after his four children. She was there till his youngest daughter got the first issue. Then she went to live with his eldest daughter Mrs. Sunanda Kadappa and stayed with her till she breathed her last.

While carrying out her worldly duties, her meditation was done with great fervour but very quietly and without show. Once when at Nimbal, there was no place for her meditation. She went and sat on the gunny bags in the store and ommiscient Gurudev said in the sitting "A true Sadhaka can sit anywhere for meditation. Ask Sharakka where she was sitting today." Gurudev knew her one-pointed devotion and always praised her Bhava.

Once young Sunanda was down with typhoid and was in critical condition. Sharakka wrote a letter to Gurudev for his blessings and 'angara' and prayed to her Guru as God. The fever left in few hours. She was overwhelmed and leaving Sunanda to care of her younger sister, rushed to Nimbal and told her tale with tears of gratitude to Gurudev. Gurudev exclaimed "I didn't do anything, it is your Bhava."

Once there were robberies in the neighbourhood and she wanted to go to Nimbal. As there were only children in the house, she asked one of Gururao's elderly student to sleep at night in the house and not to worry as Gurudev will protect the house. On returning, the student told that a thin old man was going around the house as guard and I didn't do anything. Sharakka understood what Gurudev had done for her.

In Nimbal, she helped in every way, especially in the kitchen, and in serving food. Karbasappa, Bhausaheb Maharaj's disciple said that she is like Janabai in Namdeo's house. Gurudeva replied immediately "There is no doubt about it." All sadhakas in Nimbal were impressed by her simple natural affection and helpful nature. She listened to the discussions carefully and would put the principles in her action. She heard Gurudev saying that one should repeat nama even when others are talking. Gurudev once told her musician brother one should set Nama in the music. She picked up doing Nama-Smarana continuously even when she herself was talking or singing. She consciously sought the company of Sadhakas. Nimbal was the convergence of all the disciples of Bhausaheb Maharaj, Baba and Gurudev. In Nasik, when Sharakka was there some Sadhakas would regularly come to her for meditation from saturday evening till monday morning getting up only for bodily needs. She enjoyed the philosophical and mystical dicussions which went on in the sittings and otherwise in Gurudev's house.

She once told the authoress that she never knew what attraction for other sex was. When I told this to Balasaheb Tamhankar, he exclaimed "When she has no need to conquer this first and foremost enemy, what of other vices that followed!" Her purity of heart was such that Gurudev once exclaimed "Sharakka, when I see you, I feel like lighting the camphor. Her benevolence, truthfulness, detachment from worldly gains, her righteousness, equality, compassion for all beings and all other virtues reached a climax as she attained self-realisation.

She always confided the truth of her mystical experiences with Gurudev. Once she was sitting by the well-side in Nimbal looking at the sky when Gurudev came there. He asked her about it. She described the 'Vastu' she saw and Gurudev told her that she would develop her own form and would get all the experiences he had. In spite of all her experience, she was so unassuming and humble that others could not guess the depth of her achievements. She attended Gurudev's Amrit-Mahotsava ceremony and was in Jamkhandi all the time he was there. She was very happy to witness this unique event and Gurudev's blissful attitude. It was a great blow to her when Gurdev left this world after a short illness in 1957.

She continued her meditation & visits to Nimbal with the same unwavering devotion. Now all the Sadhakas turned to her for guidance. She achieved the stage when she could give initiation to others. Elderly sadhakas like Kakasaheb Tulpule requested her to give initiation to new comers, which she refused to comply. Even then people from all walks of life would come to her for guidance and narrating their problems. She had an heart attack in 1975 and pacemaker was fixed to control her heartbeats. At that time she saw all the sadgurus in front of her and assured doctors that they will he successful.

After this heart attack she started to talk freely about

Paramarth. Her greatness was felt even by people who met her casually. Once a christian woman in hospital saw the aura around Sharakka's face and she later told that she prayed to her and her three wishes were fulfilled. Once an old woman from Arsikeri came to Nimbal and bowed down to her. She explained that she was on death bed and prayed to God. She dreamt that a woman in white blessed her and she recognised Sharakka was the woman. Sharakka told her it was her Bhava.

Her spiritual greatness was felt by Sadhakas who were managing the Nimbal Ashram problems and the trustees looked up for her guidance and suggestions which had an envigourating and unifying effect on them. Parmarth, which had lost its lustre after Gurudev, was revitalised by her.

After a few years she was again very unwell and felt her end had come. She prayed and questioned the 'Vastu' before her that what would be the use of her life if it ended then. She had yet to complete her self-realisation. She meditated ardently, standing for certain period even in that illness. And at last she had reached the highest peak of realisation. She got well. The word of her spiritual achievement spread amongst the Sadhakas.

Devotees started to gather wherever she went - Pune, Bangalore, Dharwad and Nimbal. Sadhakas would come to her with questions on spiritual life. Amongest them were disciples of Bhausaheb Maharaj - Kakasaheb Tulpule, Tatyasaheb Damle etc., Baba's disciples - Laxmanbhatji, Babasaheb Sangoram etc. Gurudev's disciples - Balasaheb Tamhankar, Shamrao Kumathekar, Narayanrao Maslekar etc. Once Babasaheb Sangoram alongwith others went to her and wanted to confirm the truth of his experience, which he narrated to her. When she told her the details, he was so moved that he prostrated before her and said that she only could explain these details.

She didn't give Nama to all but initiated a few young children. Some elders asked her which Nama they should choose and picked up the chit from Gurudev's Samadhi with the same Nama which she desired. She once said that she wouldn't wait for permission from Guru. When milk in a pot boils it cannot contain in the pot but spills over. Likewise the urge to give Nama cannot be controlled. She said the Guru has to take full responsibilites of the person whom the Nama is given. She is now old and her body could not tolerate the burden. But in spite of illnesses and old age, she helped every one in distress. Her love embraced all and she was full of forgiveness.

Even after self-realisation, she had many high experiences like "बैलिगे बैलु निर्बैलु", Amrutrasa, spiritual bliss etc. She had the experience of 'sparshana' and 'sambhashana', and being one with all beings. Experiences went on coming to her like how the world was created and so on. Gurudev had remarked more than once that she was superior to Shivlingakka and Muktabai. In 1985 Shravan, she visited Nimbal, Nimbargi and inchgeri. She was suffering from heart trouble and suffered many different illnesses in that year. Every time she would get well after meditation and her face will glow with inner light. Her worried followers would give a sign of relief. But in March 1986 she gave up her earthly abode and merged in her real Self. Then, there was no one to guide the devotees.

We all still remember the affectionate smile on her face, her assuring words in our troubles. All the Sadhakas felt her love in her presence. She would talk to everyone as if she were an ordinary person, enquire after their families, their health, their problems and everyone left her in a happy frame of mind. She would always ask all to do the Nama and Nama Smarana. She loved God and was a blessed soul. Gurudev himself has quoted the Upanishadic verse "यं एष वृणुते तेन एव सलभ्यः।" (God is gotten by him whom He loves). She had told us "what love can you give to God." All her life was a pursuit of God-realisation. God loved her and fulfilled her quest. It is He who loves you. (त्याचे जवळी देव भक्तीभावे उभा) God stands near the devotee with a heartful of devotion. She was a living example of this.

May she bestow her grace upon us so that we can follow her life of devotion.

- Mrs. Sucharita Bhagwat

C/o. Shri. Shrikant K. Bhagwat
A-102, Twin Towers,
Behind Wireless Colony,
Aundh, PUNE 411007.

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Time and oft have the Upanishads insisted upon the necessity of initiation by a Guru. Unless one be initiated by a Guru in the path of Self-realisation, one cannot attain the goal of mystic life..... Unless the, spiritual teacher be of a superior calibre spiritual knowledge would be hard of attainment, and again, unless the initiation comes from a Spiritual Teacher who has realised his identity with the Self, there can be no knowledge of the subtle path which transcends all power of logic and argumentation..... Hence, Arise! Awake! and learn from those who are better than ye!

- Gurudev in Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy p. 330

Sublimation of Stubbornness in Nimbargi Sampradaya

Stubbornness in mundane life very often results in bitter experiences. But this generally unacceptable impulse of stubbornness in the worldly matters can be transformed into a spiritually acceptable way under the guidance of a genuine spiritual teacher. One comes across a number of illustrations in support of this fact in spiritual literature. However, an attempt has been made here to present certain concrete instances of this nature that are culled from the history of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

To make the matter more intelligible, it can be said that this paper portrays how seven disciples/admirers of Nimbargi Sampradaya viz., Dajiba, Chintopant, Baba, Rudrappa, Ramachandra, Basappa and the *Gowda* of Kannur village have employed their stubbornness in the service of divine under the spiritual guidance of either Sri Nimbargi Maharaj - the founder of Nimbargi Sampradaya or Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar - an ardent disciple of the founder of Nimbargi Sampradaya.

Sri Nimbargi Maharaj used to give discourses on *Pothi* at *Nagarkhana* (a place where instruments of a band are kept) of the temple of Bheemaraya in Devar Nimbargi. On one such occasion Patil Dajiba of Satalgon - a disciple of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj heard that if one meditates on divine name, God takes care of his devotee in every respect. On knowing this, Dajiba made up his mind to test the validity of the statement and told his spiritual teacher, "If God is going to take care of his devotees who meditate, let us sit together for meditation here itself. Let's see whether God provides food to our bellies!" Sri Nimbargi Maharaj tried to console Dajiba and observed, "Oh man! One should not test God like this." But Dajiba was not prepared to give up his stand. Then Sri Nimbargi Maharaj agreed to sit for the meditation alongwith him there and to see what is going to happen.

Three Praharas[1] passed in meditation. But there was no sign of food. Dajiba said, "Maharaj, where is your God? Why doesn't He provide food yet?" Sri Nimbargi Maharaj told Dajiba to continue his meditation with patience. Again two and half hours passed in meditation. Dajiba grew very impatient. But he could not leave the place as Sri Nimbargi Maharaj was still sitting for meditation. At that time some merchants from Solapur arrived there for Darshan of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj. They visited Sri Nimbargi Maharaja's house before coming to the temple of Bhimaraya. In the house of Nimbargi Maharaj they were told that Sri Nimbargi Maharaj had not come for lunch. Therefore, the merchants took one pot and filled it with water from the stream on their way to the temple. After coming to the temple, they placed the Pedhas, the Barphis, the mangoes and the flowers etc. along with the pot of water in front of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj. Sri Nimbargi Maharaj laughed and told, "Why are you placing them in front of me? Keep them in front of Dajiba who is sitting here." Thus Dajiba understood the truthfulness of Sri Nimbargi Maharaj's words (Vide Deshpande 1952 : 23-24)

If the aforementioned incident indicates the pragmatic function of the religion, the incidence that is narrated below sheds light on the transcendental function of religion.

The main spiritual discipline in Nimbargi Sampradaya is meditation on divine name granted by a realized *Sadguru*. This name is divinity itself - God-in-*posse* as it reveals to the intuitive vision or audition of a saint at the height of meditation. Thus this name carries with it the divine power. Hence meditation on it becomes a process of identification with the divinity. Naturally it leads to the blissful vision of the *Ātman* (Sangoram, Deshpande 1978 : xi-xii).

It is the firm conviction of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar- the founder of Inchageri Sampradaya that any one who meditates on Divine Name daily at least for nine hours with devotion over a period of nine months and follows the two vows of keeping away from other's wealth and spouse should be blessed with *Prachiti*/mystical experience. It seems that Chintopant Apte of Jamkhandi wanted to test this fact.

Chintopant intimated to Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar, "I take *Nam*. If I do not get *Prachiti* I bring disgrace to you by publishing in the newspaper."

Chintopant was blessed with spiritual experiences in a month's time. Having realized the truthfulness of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar's path he went to Inchageri to take part in Shravana Saptah by a bullock cart (Kulkarni 1995:122).

Without mental purification it is not possible to enter into the spiritual realm. One important step in this direction as noted earlier is not to long for other's wealth and spouse. Sri Amburao Maharaj/Baba strictly conformed to these and other such norms throughout his spiritual career. It is interesting to note below how Baba kept himself away even from the possession of his spiritual teacher - Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar.

Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar got stitched two *Garam Bara Bandi* (*Bara Bandi* is a kind of warm jacket) - one for himself and the other for his ardent disciple Baba who used to go to forest for meditation even during winter. Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar handed over the *Garam Bara Bandi* to Baba. Baba saw it and expressed, "*Bandi* is fine." Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj said affectionately to Baba, when Baba was about to return it to him, "I have got this *Bandi* stitched for you only. This is your *Bandi*. Wear it." But Baba asked his *Sadguru* a simple question, "What is its price?" Baba's *Sadguru* remarked, "Amburaya! I have paid its price. No other person has paid it." Baba's *Sadguru* further persuaded him to put on the *Bandi*. Baba stated, "Yes Maharaj, I know that you have showered your love on me." *Sadguru* said, "Then why do you ask the price of the *Bandi* which I have bought with love. What are you going to do with its price?" Baba replied, "You have paid the price and I didn't. Unless you take the price I am not going to take the *Bandi*." *Sadguru* said, "I am myself giving you the *Bandi*. And you are not taking it. You are conditioning the acceptance." Baba said, "I don't want this type of perishable *Bandi* from you. I would like to have spiritual imperishable *Bandi*. You are competent enough to grant me that, I am sure." Baba paid the price of the *Bandi* to his *Sadguru* and took it from him. (Kulkarni 1966 : 81-82).

All the disciples do not strictly adhere to moral codes and at times violate them and later repent. One significant function of religion is to forgive the repenting sinners and to bring them back on the pathway to God. This is mirrored in the following incidence.

Rudrappa Hipparagi is a disciple of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar. He had committed sins like indulging in alcoholic drinks even after his initiation into the spiritual life. He later confessed it before his great *Guru Bandhu* (spiritual brother) Sri Gurudeo Ranade at Nimbal and begged to be forgiven. Gurudeo Ranade told him that he was not authorized to forgive the sins of the disciplies of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar. But Rudrappa did not leave the place. After about 7-8 days Gurudeo Ranade sent a word to Rudrappa, "You have composed *Arati, Mangalam Mahalinga Umadisha*, in which Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj is described as 'Srishtikarta' ('Creator'), and therefore, Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj has forgiven you" (Vide Kulkarni 1995:334).

Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar did not like people doing any kind of favour to him. However his heart used to melt when it was done with utmost devotion. The following last three incidences throw light on this matter.

Once Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar camped at Jalihal. At Jalihal during night he came out of a room for pissing and took out a pair of his shoes from a niche in the wall and began to carry them. At that time Ramachandra Aragi- a disciple of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar stretched his hand as he wanted to carry himself his spiritual master's shoes. Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar was observing silence and therefore without telling Ramachandra anything he pushed him away. Ramachandra fell down near the edge of a platform and began to tremble. Meanwhile, Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar went outside for pissing, wearing the shoes. Ramachandra thought, "Don't I deserve even to hold Maharaj's shoes? I do not mind even if he takes away my life. I will keep

Maharaj's shoes in their original place." Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar understood the mind of Ramachandra and on his return asked Ramachandra to keep his pair of shoes in the niche of the wall and Ramachandra, therefore, felt very much elated. (Kulkarni 1995:186).

Basappa Malakappa Katagi of Jamkhandi is one of the most devoted disciples of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar. After one of his visits of Maharaj to the house of Basappa, there was prosperity in the business of Basappa. In view of this, faith of Basappa in Maharaj was further strengthened. Basappa made up his mind to invite his *Sadguru* for meals to his (Basappa's) house as and when Maharaj visits Jamkhandi. But his *Sadguru* was a Brahmin and he himself was a Lingayat. One idea, however, flashed in the mind of Basappa, and that is, to send *Sidha* (groceries) along with ghee to his *Sadguru*. Accordingly, Basappa sent *Sidha* to the cook of his *Sadguru*. Basappa thought that the *Sidha* sent by him must have entered the belly of his *Sadguru* and to ascertain this he made an enquiry. The cook of Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar explained the truth in plain words to Basappa as follows :

The cook of Maharaj said "Maharaj accepts nothing from anybody. He does not accept even *Chandi* (a kind of food for horse) for his horse from anybody. So do not be carried away by the illusion that your *Sidha* has entered the belly of Maharaj."

On knowing that Maharaj has not accepted his *Sidha*, Basappa became sorrowful and resolved not to take food unless and until his Sadguru partakes of some food from his (Basappa's) house.

Basappa sat in a remote corner of the hall when *Pothi* was being read in the afternoon. As per the custom of Lingyatas, he wore Vibhuti[2] on his forehead to give the impression that he has taken his food. Maharaj remained silent in spite of knowing all the matter.

The next day the same thing repeated. Maharaj enquired, "What Basappa! Have you taken your food today at least?" Basappa showed the strips of *Vibhuti* on his forehead. Then Maharaj remained silent.

Basappa attended *Pothi* on the third day after wearing *Vibhuti* on his forehead and controlled his hunger somehow. Maharaj enquired, "Have you taken your meals?" Basappa's fingers turned towards the *Vibhuti* on his forehead. Maharaj could not control his emotions and said, "Do you think that I am unaware of the fact that you are fasting for the last three days? Why this stubbornness?" Basappa in a trembling voice said, 'You have shown me golden days and you are not prepared to take even a morsel of food in my house, then why should I take meals?" Touched by deep devotion of Basappa, Maharaj said, "There is no parallel to your devoted faith. Today, I will come to your house for meals." Maharaj had his meals in Basappa's house and it was a victory of the devotee as Maharaj had to relax his strict rule for the sake of his great devotee. (Kulkarni 2000:117-118)

Finally, I shall deal with the incidence that has taken place at Kannur village. In search of a proper place for the establishment of a Math, once Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj Umadikar camped at Kannur. The village head (*Gowda*) of Kannur had a very high regard for Maharaj. The *Gowda* sent the Sidha to Maharaj. Ramabhau Tikotikar - the cook of Sri Bahusaheb Maharaj Umadikar sent it back to the *Gowda* as he (the cook) was instructed to do so by Maharaj. Therefore, the head of the village got wild and by a beat of public proclamation of tom-tom (*Dangura*) admonished the villagers that nobody should sell milk, ghee, and butter to Maharaj. Maharaj accepted the Sidha with the sole intention of not hurting the sentiments of the *Gowda*. (Kulkarni 1995-123).

From what has been enunciated above about the seven incidences of sublimation of stubbornness it may be summed up that the first two incidences indicate that God takes care of those who meditate on Divine Name both in the worldly and the spiritual matters; the next two incidences suggest that one cannot approach God with impure mind, and the last three incidences highlight how fervour devotion melts the heart of a spiritual master.

Notes :

1. One *Prahara* means three hours.
2. *Vibhuti* is made up of the ashes of cow-dung, which Shiva is said to have smeared his body and employed now by his devotees.

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- **Prof. K. B. Dabade**
M. A., Ph. D.
House No. 9, Hirabaug,
Udupi - 576 103.

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Enough O God

"ब्यासरायतो जन्म"

(The Kannada Poem composed by
the Saint of Nimbargi in the Devanagari script)

ब्यासरायतो जन्म । ब्यासरायितो ।
ब्यासरायितु वासुदेवा दशवेष धारकने
केशवेश भाषे पालिप ओडेय कृष्ण ओय्यो एन्न ॥१॥

आशे माडिदे प्राण घाशि तिळियदे ।
आशे माडि पाशेयोकु घासियादे शेष
शयन वासुदेवा वारिजा कांता
वारुणनंते कायो एन्ननु ॥२॥ सेळविगादेनो

त्रिगुण मड्डुविलिहेनो । त्रिगुण एंबो
शूलधारि । सूक्ष्म अंग सोंकितल्ल अंग
संग गुरु लिंग जंगम एन्न हिंगिसो बेग ॥३॥

Enough is enough, this life
Tired am I, *O Vasudev a -dasha vesh dhari,*
O Keshav esha, the trusted one
Carry me away *O Lord Krishna ;*
Enough is enough, this life, O Vasudeva

Having desired things and hurt myself unawares,
Being caught by wants, tormented am I,
O Sheshashayana Vasudeva, Varijakantha,
Foster me O Lord, like *Varuna;*
Enough is enough, this life, *O Vasudeva*

Swirl'd am I in the whirlpool '*Triguna*',
O bearer of the spearhead '*Triguna*',
Alas! it pricked my subtle part along with the gross,
Overcome me anon, *O Gurulinga Jangama*,
Enough is enough, this life, *O Vasudeva*

Transcreated by :
– **Prof Yashwant Achar**
H. No. 45, Heera Baugh,
Udupi - 576 103.

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The sage sees the Ātman in all and sees the Ātman alone.... for a man to whom all these beings have become the Ātman, what infatuation can these possibly be when he has seen unity in all things? He has gone to the end of sorrow and has torn asunder the etherlike skin of derire that had so long enveloped him in darkness and despair. Al' his desires have been at an end because he has attained to the fulfilment of the highest desire, namely realisation of the Ātman. As drops of water may not adhere to the leaf of a Lotus, so may sin never contaminate him. There is no feeling or repentence for him; he never bethinks himself as to why it was that he did not do good actions or why he did only bad ones. He has come to learn of the nature of Reality and has thus gone beyond the reach of these duals.

- Gurudeo in Constuctive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy
p. 316

Śaṅkarācārya's
Prabhodha-Sudhākara

आयुः-क्षण-लव-मात्रं न लभ्यते हेम-कोटिभिः क्वापि ।
तच्चेद् गच्छति सर्वं मृषा ततः काधिका हानिः ॥१६॥

Even a very small part of a moment of life (-period) is no where secured with the help of crores of gold-coins. And if that entire life passes in vain, then what loss more than that can be there ? (16).

नरदेहातिक्रमणात् प्राप्तौ पश्वादि-देहानाम् ।
स्व-तनोरप्यज्ञाने परमार्थस्यात्र का वार्ता ॥१७॥

After the passing away (i. e. destruction) of the human body, when there is obtainment of the bodies of beasts etc. there is no knowledge of even one's own body. Then how can there be any thought (i. e. knowledge) of the highest reality? (17).

सततं प्रवाह्यमानैः वृषभैरश्वैः खरैर्गजैर्महिषै : ।
हा कष्टं क्षुत्क्षामै : श्रांतैर्नो शक्यते वक्तुम् ॥१८॥

(Suppose there is birth in the species of beasts. Then) Alas! It is not possible to describe the sorrow/pain suffered by (beasts like) bulls, horses, asses, elephants and he-buffaloes who are always driven to carry burdens, even if they are emaciated due to hunger, and exhausted (18).

रुधिर-त्रिधातु-मज्जा-मेदो-मांसास्थि-संहतिर्देहः ।
स बहिस्त्वचा पिनद्धस्तस्मान्नो भक्ष्यते काकै : ॥१९॥

The body is a conglomeration of blood, three factors, marrow, fat, flesh and bones. It is externally covered by the skin. Hence it is not eaten by crows (19).

Notes :- The word 'tridhatu' (three factors) refers to the triad of phlegm, wind of and bile.

नासाग्राद् वदनाद् वा कफं मलं पायुतो विसृजन् ।
स्वयमेवैति जुगुप्सां अंतःप्रसृतं च नोवेत्ति ॥२०॥

The body itself which releases phlegm via the tip of nose or mouth, and excretion through anus becomes the object of disgust, and it does not know whatever is running inside it (20).

पथि पतितमस्थि दृष्ट्वा स्पर्श -भयादन्यमार्गतो याति ।
नो पश्यति निज-देहं चास्थि-सहस्रावृतं परितः ॥२१॥

A man seeing a bone fallen on the path goes by another way, due to fear of contact (with the bone), but he does not cognise the fact that his own body is full of thousands of bones on all sides (21).

Notes : (I) A bone outside of the body is an inpure thing and hence is avoided by a man. (2) The words 'thousands of bones' in a body are mere exageration.

केशावधि नरवराग्रादिमंत : पूति - गंध-संपूर्णम् ।
बहिरापि चागरु-चंदन-कर्पूराद्यै र्विलेपयति ॥२२॥

From the tip of the hair upto the end of nails, the body is internally filled with foul smell / odour. Yet a man besmears it on the outside by means (fragrant substances like) agaru, sandal, camphor, etc. (22).

Note : Agaru is a variety of sandal-wood.

यत्नादस्य पिधत्ते स्वाभाविक-दोष-संघातम् ।
औपाधिक-गुण-निवहं प्रकाशयन् श्लाघते मूढः ॥२३॥

A foolish person with efforts hides the group of the natural faults (of the body), and praises (it) by revealing/ manifesting group of good qualities brought by external things (23)

क्षतमुत्पन्नं देहे यदि न प्रक्षाल्यते त्रिदिनम् ।
तत्रोत्पत्तंति बहवः कृमयो दुर्गंध-संकीर्णाः ॥२४॥

Many worms/germs full of foul smell spring up there in the wound created on the body, if and when the wound is not properly washed during three days (24).

यो देहः सुप्तोऽभूत् सुपुष्प-शय्योपशोभिते तल्पे ।
संप्रति स रज्जुकाष्ठैर्नियंत्रितः क्षिप्यते वह्नौ ॥२५॥

That body which was used to lie asleep on a bed badecked with mattresses decorated with fine flowers is now (after death) is bound by cords with wooden staffs, and in (then) thrown in the (funeral) fire (25).

सिंहासनोपविष्टं दृष्ट्वा यं मुदमवाप लोकोऽयम् ।
तं कालाकृष्ट-तनुं-विलोक्य नेत्रे निमीलयति ॥२६॥

People (or subjects) who got delight at for seeing that (king) seated on the Lion-throne now shut their eyes, after looking at him whose body is dragged by the god of death (26).

Note :- In this stanza the case of a king who is considered to be fortunate is mentioned.

एवंविधोऽतिमलिनो देहो य त्सत्तया चलति ।
तं विस्मृत्य परेशं वह त्यहंतामनित्येऽस्मिन् ॥२७॥

Forgetting/ not knowing the highest god by whose very existence such extremely soiled body functions, a man holds the sense of egoism on this non-eternal body (27).

Note : The body does its functions due to the presence of the highest god or Ātman in the body.

क्वात्मासच्चिद्रूपः क्व मांस-रुधिरास्थि-निर्मितो देहः ।
इति यो लज्जति धीमानितर शरीरं स किं मनुते ॥२८॥

Where the Self of the nature of existence and sentience and where the body made up of flesh, blood and bones? (There is a vast difference between the two). Thus thinking an intelligent man is ashamed (of his body); can he attach any importance to other bodies? (28)

(2) Censure of Sensual Objects

मूढः कुरुते विषयज -कर्दम-संमार्जनं मिश्या ।
दुरदृष्ट - वृष्टि-विरसो देहो गेहं पतत्ये व ॥२९॥

A fool tries to wash away the mud born from the sensual objects in vain. The house in the form of the body rendered weak/ strengthless by the shower of bad fortune tumbles down (29).

Notes : (1) Here body is identified with a house (2) Adṛṣṭa is the collection of man's past actions.

भार्या रूप-विहीना मनसः क्षोभाय जायते पुंसाम् ।
अत्यंत-रूपाढ्या सा पर-पुरुषैर्वशीक्रियते ॥३०॥

Wife devoid of beauty becomes the cause of agitation of the mind of man. (On the other hand) the wife who is rich with extreme beauty is won over by other men (30).

यः कश्चित् पर-पुरुषो मित्रं भृत्योऽथवा भिक्षुः ।
पश्यति हि साभिलाषं विलक्षणोदार - रूपवतीम् ॥३१॥

Whosoever the other man may be- a friend or a servant or a mendicant, he with (sexual) desire observes the wife who has extremely excellent beauty (31).

यं कंचित् पुरुष-वरं स्वभर्तुरतिसुंदरं दृष्ट्वा ।
मृगयति किं न मृगाक्षी मनसेव परस्त्रियं पुरुषाः ॥३२॥

Is it not that the deer-eyed wife after seeing any excellent man more handsome than her own husband hanker after him? Is it also not that a man in his own mind desires for a woman other than his own wife ? (32).

Note: Or the second sentence above in the question form can be taken as an assertive one thus :- A man in his own mind desires for a women other than his own wife.

एवं सुरुप-नार्या भर्ता कोपान् प्रतिक्षणं क्षीण : ।
नो लभते सुखलेशं बलिमिव बलिभुग् - बहुष्वेक : ॥३३॥

Just as a crow from among many crows does not get the pleasure of enjoying the offering meant for the crows, so also a husband of a wife of great beauty, being distressed every moment due to anger/envy, does not sccure even a small particle of happiness (33).

(to be continued...)

-Prof. **Dr. K. V. Apte**
Yajurved Appartment,
ST Colony Road, Vishrambag,
Sangli - 416 415

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When the tree of unreality has been cut-down by the sword of Self-knowledge, then.... one is able to see one's own form, one's own Self. This is, however, not to be, compared to the vision of the reflection in a mirror; for the reflection in a mirror is simply an 'other' of the seeing man. The vision of the individual Self is as a spring which may exist in its own fullness even when it does not come up in a well. When the water dries up, the image goes back to its prototype.

- (Gurudeo in Mysticism in Maharashtra p. 120)

Dāsbodh

(Advice to devotees and seekers of God)

Shri Samarth Ramdas Swami, the great saint of Maharashtra (1608-1681) dictated the lines of the treatise "Dasbodh" to his disciple Kalyanswami who took down the dictation when they were in a cave & thus was the creation of the treatise. The treatise is voluminous as well as valuable. It gives spiritual advice to devotees as well as non-devotees to make them spiritual seekers. In addition, it gives ample advice on how to behave and face the world, which is inevitable for every man in worldly life. For a common man, the world is very much real, has to face the worldly activities and find his own way out to become a devotee and a spiritual seeker. Dasbodh is probably the only treatise that gives advice on becoming a spiritual seeker as well as a successful man in the world. Samarth Ramdas Swami was a contemporary of Chhatrapati Shivaji the Great. He had given Mantra-deeksha to three persons namely, Shivaji, Balaji Avaji Chitnis and Neelkantha Mujumdar at the same time.

Ramdas Swami was a firm Sanyasi from his boyhood and lived alongwith his disciples by begging only dry alms. He would never accept cooked food. He encouraged the youth to build Hanuman temples and gymnasiums, worship Hanuman as God of strength and become strong to resist the Mogul atrocities. He helped Shivaji in many ways while remaining outside the governance as a true Sanyasi.

The treatise is held in high esteem by the Nimbargee Sampradaya. Ramdas Swami himself tells what is expected to be found, in the treatise, before taking up the work, in the form of questions from the listeners in the audience and his answer to them.

The listerners ask what is this treatise, what is told there in and what we will get by listening to it. Ramdas Swami answers; The name of the treatise is Dasbodh. It is in the form of a conversation between Guru and disciple. It explains in detail the path of devotion to God, the nine kinds of devotion, the true knowledge, the characteristics of renunciation and in general discusses the spiritual aspect of life. The firm opinion expressed therein is that man can reach God definitely by means of devotion. Resolute firmness mainly of devotion, of absolute knowledge, clarity in knowing the state of one's Self are expounded therein. The resolve to get absolute spiritual advice, to realise and attain oneness with one's deity and freedom from bondage are set forth in detail.

The real form of the Self, the bodyless state of the Self, the aloofness of Self are interpreted therein. What is exactly meant by the principal deity, the main attributes of a devotee, the relation between Self and the Supreme Self are also discussed. The definite knowledge of Brahma, the different opinions about it, the answer to "Who am I" are given therein. The main characteristics of true worship of God, lyrical songs in praise of God and a variety of talents and skills are set forth in detail. The creation of Maya, the five main elements of material existence and the question who is the creator appear in the discussion.

Various misconceptions, doubts, false notions and vague questions are discussed and dismissed as fruitless. This is how the discussions in the treatise are arranged. Those which are given in short at some places, appear in detail elsewhere. Thus the whole of Dasbodh is split in convenient chapters and groups of stanzas to explain all the details with the help of original writings like Upanishads, Vedant Srutis and real experiences of the Self given in original epitomes. The different interpretations do not prove a thing as false, if supported by self-experience. If one propounds something as false out of ego or envy, it goes against so many original treatises as well as divine utterances.

Shiva-geeta, Rama-geeta, Guru-geeta, Garbh-geeta, Uttargeeta, Avadhootgeeta, Veda, Vedant, Bhagwadgeeta, Brahmageeta, Hansa-geeta, Pandav-geeta, Ganesh-geeta, Yama-geeta, Upanishads and Bhagwat are brought in as supporting evidence along with divine utterances. How can there be a man so fallen as not to believe in Divine utterences? In this treatise there is nothing which is unsupported by divine utterences. A man who blames a treatise without going through the same is an evil and egoistic man who do so out of emotions like envy only.

Envy rises out of egoistic tendencies and out of envy rise dislike and disdain. Later it shapes into anger which becomes unsurmountable. Thus a man degraded from inside obviously undergoes this change due to ego only. Overpowered by desire and anger, how can one remain gentle and straight forward in nature? It is like drinking nectar and then becoming a servant of planet Rahu. Let us end this talk by saying that the best way is to follow a reliable anthority and avoid false pride.

Listeners had asked before what the treatise contains which I have told till now in brief. The next question is about the benefits of listening. By listening the man's doubts get resolved once for all and his actions undergo a qualitative change. One finds the desired path with ease, efforts become troublefree and one gets to know the technique of reaching one's deity easily and with less effort. Ignorance, pain and misconceptions disappear and are replaced by attainment of true knowledge quickly as a result of listening of the treatise. Blessed become the yogis who are able to attain renunciation without difficulty and come to know the real technique to sucessful effort along with sound reasoning.

Those who suffer from misconception, false knowledge and confused thinking become well-aware, clever, logical, wise and alert while knowing the importance of timeliness. The idle becomes industrious, the sinful resort to the path of goodness and those with ill-will and dislike, praise the ways of devotion. Those in bondage desire to be free. Silly fools become clever and keenly alert. Non-devotees also become liberated from bondage due to path of devotion. The deficiencies of nature disappear and the fallen rise up to sacredness. Beings reach to a state of progress due to the listening of the treatise. The deficiencies of body and the intellect, misconceptions due to doubts, unsettling dejections due to worldly involvements run away due to listening. These are thus the benefits of listening. Missing the listening means opening the way down the lower steps. The mind is set at rest and satisfaction. The benefit depends on the purpose and intent of the person. Those who approach with doubt and disdain, get the results in the same way.

- P. D. Dharwarkar

188, Guruwar Peth, Tilakwadi,
Belgaum - 590 006.

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A Note on Vachana-The Religious Language of the Veeraśaiva Saints

I

Religion is usually understood as a reference to a Reality. This Reality, for most of the religions, with some exceptions, is God. In religion there is a commiment on the part of man to the Reality[1]. When that commiment is expressed in prayer and worship, it may be called religion.

Philosophers and theologians are concerned with the definition of religion as a reference to a Reality. Advaita Vedānta calls it 'Not this, Not this' (*neti, neti*); Otto calls it 'Mysterium tramendum[2]'. Religion may be regarded as a communication between the transcendental Reality and man and between man and man. Religious people offer prayers to the transcendental Reality and share their experiences with one another. It may be liturgy in Christianity or yogic practice in Hinduism that aim at real communion with god and between men. It expresses systematically the communion. It is here that the use of language begins. The Veeraśaiva Saints, the religious thinkers of South India have used language, to express this communion. And the language is called *Vachana*. The *Vachanas* are the expressions of the religious quest of the Viraśaiva Saints like Basavanna, Devara Dāsimayya, Akkamahādevi, Allama Prabhu etc. How does a philosopher look at these theological statements? An answer to this, forms the main theme of this paper.

II

Leaving the theologians to preach alone, the philosopher is concerned with the meaning rather than the truth of religious statements. An unbridgeable gulf seems to have been created between a theologian and a philosopher. In the words of Gilbert Ryle, "Philosophy and Theology have not been on speaking terms." Could we make them to be on speaking terms? This is the crux of the problem of the nature of religious language.

III

A '*Vachana*' is a religious free versa in Kannada. Literally it means 'Saying', the 'thing said'. Kannada is one of the four Dravidian languages spoken in South India. Its literature is more than 2000 years old. During this period, 10th and 12th centuries are considered to be very important. Veeraśaiva saints like Devara Dāsimayya, Basavanna, Mahādeviyakka and Allama Prabhu may be taken as the representatives of this period. 'Veeraśaiva' means militant faith in god, mostly addressed as Śiva. In Veeraśaivism, god is symbolised as a 'Linga' a stone emblem. It is believed to represent the presence of god Śiva, the auspicious one. Śiva is the supreme god, addressed in the *Vachanas.*

The *Vachanakaras* spoke their experience of god in a mother tongue Kannada and not in Sanskrit. *Vachanas* are in contrast to the Sanskrit religious texts, described as *Śruti* and *Smriti*. *Smriti* means, what is remembered, what is memorable on the other hand, *Śruti* means what is heard, what is received. The compositions of the Veeraśaiva saints are called *Vachanas* or 'what is said'. Vachana is an active mode. It is not what is heard but said. Not remembered or received but uttered here and now[3]. To the Veeraśaiva saints, Religion is not a matter of discussion, not a pleasure derived from hair-splitting logic, not a discussive thought, but a way of life, the experience of the 'here and now.'

Vachanas are thus the innovations and spontaneity of free verse. The *Vachanakāras* came from all classes, all caste and all occupations. In the words of Ramanujan : "*Vachanas* are literature, but not merely literary. They are a literature, in spite of itself, scorning artifice, ornament, learning, privilege; a religious literature, literary because religious; great voices of a sweeping movement of protest and reform in Hindu society; witnesses to conflict and ecstasy in gifted mystical men. *Vachanas* are our wisdom literature. They have been called the Kannada - upanishads some here the tone and voice of old Testament prophets or the Chuang-Tou here. *Vachanas* are also our pslams and hymns. Analogues may be multiplied. The *Vachanas* may be seen at still another version of the perennial philosophy."[4] They contain, again in the words of Ramanujan, an 'embarrassment of riches'. They are thematically typical, unique in idea, image or form. In the language of the *Vachanas*, 'the word takes us to the word behind the words'[5]. For instance take the *Vachana* '*The temple and the Body*'

The rich
will make temples for Śiva.
What shall I,
a poor man,
do?
My legs are pillars,

the body the shrine
the head a cupola
of gold
Listen, O lord of the meeting rivers,
things standing shall fall,
but the moving ever shall stay.[6]

This *Vachana* makes a distinction between 'making' and 'being'. The affluent can make a temple, but they may not be or become temples by what they accomplish. Again what is made is a mortal structure, but what one is, is immortal. The distinction between the 'standing' (*Sthāvara*) and 'moving' (*Jaṅgama*) is basic and central to Veeraśaivism. *Sthāvara* is that which stands, an inanimate thing. And whatever 'stands' also falls. But *Jaṅgama* is moving, an animate thing. Here is an existential contrast between a 'thing' and a 'person'. A *Jaṅama*, in Veeraśaivism is regarded as a god-incarnate. He is a *Virāgi*, who has renounced the world. He moves from place to place representing God to the devoted. *Sthāvara* means an idol of god, any static symbol a temple or the *Linga* worshipped in temple. Thus there is a contrast between god and worship and Basavanna prefers the original to the symbol, the body to the temple, the poor (represented by the living man, the *Jaṅgama*) to the rich, (represented by the temple).?

The Vachanas are essentially devotional songs. They contain personal devotion to god. They rejected vedic tradition and depended on the individual. They condemn in strong possible terms the vedic rituals and animal sacrifices. They are against attaching an element of sanctity to the so called sacred place and sacred time.

Here is a Vachana which poch-poohs the orthodox ritual :

See-Saw water mills blow their heads
So what?
Do they get to be devotee
to the matter?
The tongs join hands
So what?
Can they be humble in service
to the Lord?
Parrots recite
So what?
Can they read the Lord?
How can the slave of the Bodiless god
Desire,
Know the way
Our Lord's Men move
or the stance of their standing?[8]

To quote Basavanna's another Vachana, which goes against animal sacrifice:

The sacrificial lamb brought for the festival

ate up the green leaf brought for the decorations.
Not knowing a thing about the kill,
it wants only to fill its belly,
born that lay, to die that day.

But tell me :

did the killers survive,
O lord of the meeting rivers?[9]

In the following Vachana of Devara Dāsimayya, contempt for sacred space and sacred time is writ large :

To the utterly at-one with Śiva
there is no dawn,

no new moon
no noon day,
nor equinoxes,
nor sunsets,
nor full moons:
His front yard
is the true Benares,
O Rāmanātha[10]

The Vachanakāras make a distinction between *anubhava* (experience) and *anubhāva* (the experience). *Anubhava* is just what is got through sense experience about the world and its affairs. But *anubhāva* is a relentless search for the experience which is unpredictable. The *Vachana* is a spontaneous cry for the knowledge of God. Making and doing are both opposed to being, or knowing. Here is a Vachana from Allama Prabhu :

Feed the poor
tell the truth
make water-places
and build tanks for a town-
    You may then go to heaven
    after death, but you will get nowhere
    near the truth of our Lord
And the man who knows our Lord
he gets no results[11]

The *Vachanakaras*, of course did not use sophisticated phrases to express what they wanted to express, either the state of bondage or release. They used stock phrases, proverbs and religious common places of the time. It included figures, symbols and paradoxes drawn from concrete Indian symbology. They made use of a large number of similes and analogies.[12]

Here is analogy of silkworm and cocoon pressed into service by Mahādeviyakka:

Like a silk worm weaving
her house with love
from her marrow
        and dying
in her body's threads
winding tight, round
and round,
        I burn
desiring what the heart desires.
Cut through, O Lord,
my hearts greed,
and show me
your way out
O lord white as Jasmine[13]

In the Vachanas there is an expression of kindness for all animals, beasts, men etc. Basavanna asks, "Where is religion without loving kindness"? Religion should not be hypocritical. Basavanna says :

They say: Pour, pour the milk!
When they see a snake image in a stone
But they Cry: Kill, Kill!
When they meet a snake for real[14]

The Vachanakaras were interested in using the changing local substandard spoken dialects of their places[15] and what is more, they expressed religious feelings in the language of secrecy. "They (the Vachanas) evolve a distinctive structure. Their metre is not syllabic but syntatic: the regular: - ties and returning units are not usually units of sound but units of syntax and semantics. The oral origins of the poetry are clear in its favourite structure. The poetics of the Vachana is an oral poetics"[16]

In the *Vachanakaras* there are allegories which need no key at all. They are so simple and straight forward. For example the Vachana of Mahādeviyakka :

My mind is my maid
by her kindness, I join
my Lord
        My utterly beautiful Lord
        from the mountain-peaks
        my lord as white as Jasmine
and I will make him
my good husband[17]

When all is said and done it must be pointed out that in their zeal for *aparoksha Jñāna*, direct knowledge of god, the *Vachanakaras* find language, logic and metaphor, insufficient. Yet they start their religious language with striking metaphors and to our dismay, deny them at the end.[18] Here is a classic instance from Allama Prabhu, the greatest metaphysical

Vachanakara :

Looking for your Light,
I went out :
        It was like the Sudden dawn
        of a million million suns,
a ganglion of lightnings
for my wonder.

O Lord of Caves,
if you are light
there can be no *metaphor*

IV

The Vachanakaras do not seem to agree with the logical positivist's approach to Religion like most of the propositions of theology, are non-sensical pseudo propositions the "honoured errors." If it is to be called nonsense then the *Vachanakaras* reply that some kinds of nonsense are very necessary. Some religious talk may be remarkably profound nonsense, but it has pragmatic value.

This is upheld by a system of philosophy which is rigorously logical viz Advaita vedanta. God or *Saguna Brahman* of Advaita vedenta, so to say is a product of ignorance in as much as, it is meant for the dull-witted *(mandamati).* Yet it is a step towards the realisation of the highest reality viz. the Nirguna Brahman, which is logical to the core. The *vachanakaras* agree with the soft lingustic Analystic approach to the theological problems that from the very start the theological statements should not be ruled out. The theological statements must be understood and linguistic analysis need not be used to refute them __________ this seems to be the mind of the *Vachanakaras*[20]. The theological statements are not to be regarded as vacuous, crypto - psychological or crypto-biographical. In this, the Vachanakaras differ from J. N. Findlay, A. Flew, R. Braithwaite, H. M. Hare, etc.

The *Vachanas* imply that the theological statements are cognitive and the *Vachanakaras* come nearer to Basil Mitchell, I. M. Crambie John Hick etc.

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2. Otto R. *The Idea of the Holy* (A Pelican book, 1959) P. 26-27.
3. A. K Ramanujan *Speaking of Śiva* (English translation of the original Kannada Vachanas with *an introduction*) Penguin book, 1973. P. 37.
4. Ibid, P. 12
5. Ibid, P. 13
6. Basavana's *vachana* 820. Ibid P. 19. Basavanna was a great thinker who provided a platform for the spiritual utterances of the Veerasaiva saints.
7. Not merely that. The Veeraśaiva trinity includes guru, linga and Jangama - the spiritual teacher, the emblem of siva (stone) and wandering mendicant representing Jangama. They are three yet one.
8. A. K. Ramanujan, P. 25 (Basavanna's *vachana* No. 125)
9. Ibid, P. 26 (Vachana No. 129)
10. Ibid (Vachana No. 98)
11. Ibid (Vachana No. 959)
12. Ibid P. 39
13. Ibid, P. 41 (Vachana No. 17)
14. Ibid, P. 54
15. Ibid, P. 46
16. Ibid, P. 42
17. Ibid, P. 50 *Vachana* No. 328
18. Ibid P. 52
19. Ibid, *Vachana* No. 972
20. Religious language, according to the Viraśaiva saints embodies an attitude of devotion to something other than the self. It enables man to apprehend the Infinite under different names and under different disguise. It is a faculty, which the mind cannot dispose of inspite of sense and reason.

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Res :-
LIG 112. "Bhamati"
Gangotri, Hudco Layout,
II cross, Saraswatipuram
Mysore - 570 009

- Dr. V. N. Sheshgiri Rao
Professor and Head
PG Department of Philosophy
Mysore University
"Manasagangotri" Mysore-6

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Fragments of Empedocles in Buddhism and Jainism

Abstract- Two fragments of Empedocles can be compared with Buddhist and Jain teachings. This paper is devoted to this comparison.

Empedocles the pre-Socratic (495 BC- 435 BC) is one of the earliest of Greek philosophers to have put across the belief in the transmigration of souls. The teachings embodied in his Purifications presents the reincarnation of an inhabitant of the mythical Golden Age. The Golden Age was one in which its inhabitants spent a life of genuine simplicity, unity, friendship, peace, non-violence. It was an age devoid of any slaughter- both human and animal. Animals in particular were not slaughtered either for food or sacrifice.

"Their altar was not steeped in the pure blood of bulls rather it was this the greatest abomination among men to tear out the life from goodly limbs and eat them" (Fr. 128)

These inhabitants worshipped Kupris or love. She is a goddess who represents all the virtues characteristic of the inhabitants of the Golden Age.

The beauty of this age is completely destroyed when one of the inhabitants, a daemon, committed the sin of bloodshed and consumed animal flesh. The punishment inflicted on him is fearful. In Fr. 115.

"There is an oracle of Necessity an ancient decree of the gods, eternal sealed with broad oaths that when any one of the daemons whose lot is long life sinfully stains his dear limbs with slaughter and following Hate has sworn a false oath these must wander thrice ten thousand seasons far from the blessed being born throughout the time in to all the forms of mortal creations which exchange one grievous way of life for another?" While being so direly punished this daemon suffers endlessly by being reincarnated in a number of animate and inanimate bodies until he finally resumes his divine existence.

Empedocles' horror of the consumption of animal flesh is brought out in a moving fragment:

"Father lifts up his own dear son his form changed and praying seizes him witless fool: and the people are distracted as they sacrifice the imploring victim and he deaf to its cries slays it and marks ready in his halls an evil feast. And likewise son seizes father and children their mother and tearing out the life, eat and flesh of their dear ones." (Fr. 137:) and

Sextus Empiricus, Advanced Mathematics (ix. 129)

It is known that both Jain and Buddhist teachings prohibited *himsa* or violence to living beings. While it is conspicuously stressed in Jainism the Sanskrit Buddhist texts too specify it. The Lankavatara Sutta first translated into Chinese in 443 AD. Next in 513 AD and finally in 200 AD and published by the modern

Chinese scholar Bunyin-Nangio translates the lines, which correspond with Fr 117 of Empedocles. Accordingly Buddha said:

"O Great wise man! In this beginningless world the living having been wandering, there is not a single creature, which had not been sometimes mother, father, brother, sister, son, daughter or any other relative. The same adopting many re-births are born as deer or other animal, bird etc. which are really our relatives. How can a follower of Buddhism, a saint or a disciple who sees all the creatures as his brethren cut the flesh of all these creatures?"

Two aspects of these lines correspond to Empedocles. One is that there is a possibility that all living beings are related to each other and that a kinship exists among fathers, mothers and son and also that every time one kills an animal there is a possibility of causing violence to one's own kin. The latter tallies with the following fragment of Empedocles as well 'Will you not see that you are devouring each other in the ignorance of your minds'? (Fr. 136. Sextus Empiricus advanced Mathemation ix 129)

The second is that one could be reborn as deer, bird, etc. This corresponds to Empedocles' fragment which describes that be a 'boy, girl, dumb sea fish, bush and bird' (Fr. 117)

According to the teachings of Jain saint Samayasara-

'Bondage of karma will be caused by intention of injury whether the creatures may be killed or not. This is the brief of bondage for the souls from the correct stand point?

This Jain teaching corresponds to the Buddhist and Empedoclean belief in reincarnation, which causes the cyclic journey of samsara or rebirth. The soul of the daemon in Empedocles wanders, 'thrice ten thousand seasons' (Fr. 115). Similarly the Jain soul wanders in the four condition of life celestial, hellish, sub - human and human. Among the Jain sub human and human conditions are those that correspond with the births of Empedocles as mentioned in Fr. 117.

The similarities between the above fragments of Empedocles and the Buddhist and Jain teachings are, therefore many.

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Postal Address :-
720. Temple Road.
Dalugama. Kelaniya.
Sri Lanka.

- Isha Gamlath
Senior Lecturer. Dept of Western Classics
University of Kelaniya
Sri Lanka.
e mail isha@kln.ac.lk

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(Continued from last issue)

Ramchandra to Gurudev

A Pilgrim's Progress

[Biography of Gurudeo Ranade]

But, he, whose heart was deeply embedded in the Divine Name and his Spiritual Master, did not agree with their request, nor did he comply with their proposal to stay at the European Hospital for treatment. Thereafter he shifted his residence from Deccan College Hostels to the rented rooms in the city at the Wada of Shri. Godbole. There he took the Ayurvedic treatment of Maharshi Annasaheb Patwardhan and Shri. Balashastry Lagvankar.

While he was staying at Godbole Wada his young friend and student, Baburao Mhaiskar read out to Gurudev all the eighteen chapters of Bhagavad- Gita in only three days. On the third day when he opened the book of Gita, he noticed the following 58th verse of 18th chapter of Bhagavad- Gita and Gurudev felt at heart that it was a divine message for him in the midst of his deadly disease.

मच्चितः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ॥
अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान्न श्रोष्यसि विनंक्ष्यसि ॥

" Fixing Thy thought on Me, Thou Shalt, by Grace, cross over all the difficulties, but if from Self- conceit, thou will not listen (to Me) thou shalt perish." Man is free to choose salvation or perdition with this attitude of complete surrender. Young Ramchandra merged himself in the mediation on the Divine

Name. His mother was extremely anxious for the health of her son. The young wife, Smt. Sitabai must have been a helpless prey to vicarious suffering. It was only the unseen power of meditation on the spiritual Name by the holy mother and the devout son that was the sure source of relief, His mother used to wake him up for morning meditation in spite of his illness. She said "Oh my child Ramu, get up, meditate on Divine Name, as this is the most precious time in the early hours of morning." (These exact words of his mother were reported by Gurudev while narrating about his deadly disease).

Further Experience

One day, early in the morning when Gurudev was sitting for his meditation, he heard the ringing of the bell. He felt that the bell might be ringing at the time of worship of Johari Mahadeo nearby. But, just to ascertain the facts he requested his mother to see personally if the bell was ringing in the nearby temple. On verification by the mother, it was found that there was no worship being performed in such early hours of morning, nor was there any ringing of the bells. Accidentally on that day, his eyes fell upon a book, published by Vani- Vilas Press, named 'Yogataravali' by the great Adwaita philosopher, Shri. Shankaracharya. When he opened the book he noticed the following two verses :

सदाशिवोत्कानि सपादलक्ष - लयावधानानि वसंति लोके ॥
नादानुसंधान समाधिमेकं । मन्यामहे मान्यतमं लयानाम् ॥

" There are a lac and a quarter methods of concentration 'Laya' on the Divine, propounded by God Shankara. Amongst all these processes, the spiritual concentration through the mental pursuit of Divine Sound is the most important and efficacious of all, says the great Shankaracharya."

नादानुसंधान नमोऽस्तु तुभ्यं । त्वां साधनं तत्त्वपदस्य मन्ये ॥
भवत्प्रसादात् पवनेन साकं । विलीयते विष्णुपदे मनो मे ॥

"Oh Thou one- pointed Attention, (Anusandhan) on Spiritual Sound! I bow to Thee. Thou art the medium to acquaint me with the Basic Reality (Brahmatmabhava) of the Divine, With the help of my respiration, I merge in the Divinity (Holy feet of God Vishnu) alongwith Thee and entirely because of Thy Grace and Thy spiritual instrumentality."

Spiritual Meditation

Two other devoted disciples of the saint of Umadi, Shri Malharpant Joshi and Shri Lingappa Savalgi, were staying in the city. Though they were studying in different Colleges they were coming together for their spiritual meditation every day in the evening. Gurudev used to tell with a feeling of gratification that his first lessions in disciplined spiritual meditation (*Kattacha Nem*) were imbibed in him from the contact and company of the above two disciplined devotees of the saint of Umadi. When once Gurudev happened to go to the house of Malharpant Joshi in the city, he was surprised to see that these two persons were sitting erect in a difinite pose with there gaze fixed on the tip of the nose. Thus from these two spiritual co-brothers Gurudev learnt to pratice disciplined meditation whether done alone or in their company.

But on account of disease of the brain on human plane of life all the future hopes and aspirations of Gurudev shattered to pieces. His post- graduate studies were withheld. Darkness had enveloped every branch of his intellectual career and academic pursuit. He could not read even a page. So disciplined meditation on Divine Name was simply an impossibility for his weak body. But, his faith and his Bhav, love for the Divinity in the heart, were robust and upsurging even in midst of this utter despondency and desolate condition of brain, body and outer mind. Thus, it was a constant struggle or war, day and night, outside and inside. As the great saint Tukaram has put it, रात्रंदिन आम्हां युध्दाचा प्रसंग । अंतर्बाह्य जग आणि मन ॥ The war was being waged day and night. The external war was with the outside or wordly circumstances and the internal war was between his weak brain and anxious mind with robust spiritual faith in the heart. This double faced war was for Gurudev's absolute self surrender. His. helpless cry beseeching Maharaj for his grace reverberates in the letters written to him. (Original letters are in Marathi). On 28-7-1906 the young Ramachandra who had simply passed his intermediate examination, wrote a letter to his spiritual master. The important portion from that letter is given below duly translated in English.

"I feel that I should devote the entire portion of my remaining life to meditation on God's Name and in the holy company of saints, I only pray you to make me worthy of this. I am extremely worried due to my family woes. I beg of you to kindly see that I develop in my heart an attitude of renunciation and with the help of both renunciation and devotion. I should be able to progress on the Path of Wisdom."

"I know I am ignorant. There is not a bit of wisdom in me. Neither am I a poet nor a Pandit. The feeling of pride takes hold of me even from a small event. .... I realise that there is something wrong with me .... So, I shall be happy, if I know the exact nature of my defect. There is nobody who can point out my defects to me ...... Kindly give me shelter at thy feet."

On 12-2-1909 he wrote the following letter to Maharaj.

"I am immensely sorry that I am not able to fix my gaze owing to a sensation of giddiness. Medical treatment is of no avail ..... My incapacity to meditate on Name with deep faith has made me anxious about the probability of self realization. I am extremely anxious owing to the obstacles created by this disease in respect of my spiritual meditation. My desire to attend to meditation may kindly be fulfilled through your grace."

Again On 1-4-1909 he wrote the following letter to Maharaj "Recently I am attending to spiritual meditation morning and evening. My attempts for meditation are thwarted by numerous difficulties. Day and night I have a feeling that I cannot do anything. Giddiness begins no sooner than the gaze is fixed. There is a sense of hollowness in my brain and head. These are great obstacles in my meditation. My repeated intense desire to meditate on Divine Name is set at naught by the wrath of Divinity, expressed through this disease- All medicines have been exhausted. Without the grace of God and without the blessing of Saints, nothing is possible is my conviction, I feel shy to write all this to my great spiritual master. But, my feeling of identity with the body can not be easily uprooted. My only prayer to you is to enable me to meditate on the name of God with a fixed gaze."

A reply to this was sent by Maharaj On 7-4-1909 from Inchgeri.

"You may meditate on the Divine Name with your eyes completely closed. You can mentally fix your gaze on the top of the nose. Thus your reeling sensation would be stopped. With a firm determination and a fixed posture to attend to meditation as far as possible. Every moment of spare time should be utilised for spiritual contemplation on Divine Name. Constantly try to remember, the name of God in every breath. If you do like this you will regain your good health and all obstacles and difficulties will be removed and you will rest in peace and joy.

हरिनामाच्या चिंतनें ।
बारा वाटा पळती विघ्नें ॥

With the contemplation on the name of God the difficulties will be dispelled forthwith. So also अच्युतानंत गोविंद नामोच्चारण भेषजा। नश्यन्ति सकला रोगा; । सत्यं सत्यं वदाम्यहम् " With the medicine of the remembrance and uttering of the Divine Names like Achuta, Ananta and Govinda, all the diseases will be cured. This is a gurantee vouchsafed by the saints. This is a confirmed truth, 'The remembrance of the Divine Name like Brahman, and its forgetfulness is delusion'. The great Guru Maharaj has exhorted you to grasp the spirit of this sentence and act upto it. For improvement of your health a small packet of powder (Pooda Prasad), charged with Divine Grace, is sent herewith. Remember the above advice Please eat the powder. You need not be anxious. Everything will be alright and you will be happy." (From Nandeppa as directed by Maharaj)

On 7-5-1909 Gurudev again wrote the following letter to his spiritual master. "Still there is no stamina in the body and the brain. To the best of my capacity, I am remembering the Name of God day and night. I am struggling to fix my attention in Nama. Occasionally, I visualize the blue digit of the moon. If my health improves and becomes normal, I desire to attend to meditation on Divine Nama for one hour at least each time both in the morning and in the evening."

(to be continued...)

- **Dr. N. V. Kulkarni**
B.E., M. (Phil)., Ph. D.
'Abhay', 27, Savali Society,
Paud Road, PUNE - 411038.
Ph. (020) 5435358

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Activities of A.C.P.R.

Quarterly Report for the period ending 31st December 2004

1) Hon'ble Judges of Karnataka High Court Shri. S. R. Bannurmath. K. Vishwanath Shetti. Shri. H. G. Ramesh paid visit to A. C. P. R. The Judges expressed satisfaction and happiness that such an elite & spritual group is associated with A. C. P. R.Belgaum.
2) Shri Shrimad Gangadharendra Saraswati, Mahaswamiji of Shri Sousthan Swarnavallimath SONDA Tal- Sirsi, visited A. C. P. R . (Gurudev Mandir) on 23-11-2004.
3) Members of Karnatak University Dharwad visited A. C. P. R. on 31-12-2004. Their visit was in connection with the establishing Research Centre in the studies of Philosophy, affiliated to Karnatak University Dharwad.
4) Prajapita Brahmakumari's Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya Mahantesh Nagar Belgaum had organised 'Peace Meditiation' Programme on 18-01-2005 at A. C. P. R. Belgaum

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- Prof. N. R. Deshpande

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